

CQMC Coalition for Quality Maternity Care

8403 Colesville Rd, Suite 1550 • Silver Spring, MD 20910-6374

January 26, 2012

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Leonard Lance
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Alexander and Bennet and Representatives Eshoo and Lance:

On behalf of the Coalition for Quality Maternity Care (CQMC), a coalition of national professional, consumer, and human rights organizations that promote high quality maternity care for all women and newborns, we write to thank you for introducing The PREEMIE Reauthorization Act (S. 1440/H.R. 2679), a bill to reauthorize Public Law 109-450.

Prematurity is the number one killer of newborns in the United States. For infants that do survive, preterm birth is associated with many serious health problems, including cerebral palsy, chronic lung disease, and vision and hearing loss. These health problems are a tremendous challenge for the children and families affected, and also place a great financial burden on families, the educational system, public and private insurers, and others. According to a 2006 report, the annual societal cost associated with preterm birth is \$26.2 billion or \$51,600 per infant born preterm.

While the causes of preterm birth are not fully understood, research suggests that induction of labor and caesarean birth before 39 completed weeks of gestation are associated with prematurity. The PREEMIE Reauthorization Act will enhance federal research, education, awareness, and intervention activities aimed at reducing preterm birth and ensuring that more babies reach full gestation before being born. The Act will prioritize the needs of the communities most at risk for preterm birth by expanding research on racial and ethnic disparities and by establishing demonstration projects to test maternity care models designed to reduce preterm births in high-risk areas.

Again, CQMC applauds your long-time leadership in the area of maternal and child health and stands ready to help you to achieve the passage of the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act. If you wish to draw upon our assistance, please do not hesitate to contact please contact Patrick Cooney at (202) 347-0034.

Sincerely,

American Association of Birth Centers
Amnesty International USA
Black Women's Health Imperative
International Center for Traditional Childbearing
National Association of Certified Professional Midwives

American College of Nurse-Midwives
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Childbirth Connection
Midwives Alliance of North America

